



**THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
THE TRIAL COURT  
PROBATE AND FAMILY COURT DEPARTMENT  
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**PROBATE AND FAMILY COURT PARENT EDUCATION**

Since 1994 Massachusetts has required mandatory parent education programs to help parents understand and handle the challenges of the disruption of the family unit with the breakup of marriage, and to assist them in addressing and minimizing the stresses children may experience. Parties must register with an approved provider of one of these programs within sixty days of service of the original complaint. Divorcing parents must attend a Parent Education program in person.

Attendance at a Parent Education course is required of all parties to a divorce in which there are minor children or, as ordered by a judge, in other specific actions involving minor children, pursuant to Probate and Family Court Standing Order 4-08 entitled PARENT EDUCATION PROGRAM ATTENDANCE. The Standing Order remains in full force and effect.

The court may waive the attendance requirement upon motion, with notice, for one or both parties. A Motion to Waive Attendance at a Parent Education Program must be presented by the party seeking the waiver. The reason the party is alleged to be unable to participate in a program in person must be included in the motion.

On a limited basis, use of a DVD program entitled *KidCare for Co-Parents: An Educational Program for Divorcing Families* is available when a judge is considering a waiver. Examples where utilization of the DVD program may be ordered include unusual situations such as incarceration, extended hospitalization, extended military service, or residence outside of Massachusetts, of one of the parties.

*KidCare for Co-Parents* is a four and a half hour multimedia, interactive program which can be used with a DVD player on either a personal computer or a television screen. Completion of the interactive aspects of the DVD is required in order to obtain the Certificate of Attendance which must then be provided to the Court.

While this DVD is not the optimal means of satisfying the Parent Education Program Attendance requirement in most instances, it may be a reasonable alternative. Utilization of this DVD may be ordered by the court in lieu of a complete waiver of the requirement.